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SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARIAN HACHIM HASSANI DISCUSSES FORMATION
OF MODERATE BLOC, TURKEY, AND OTHER ISSUES

REF: A) BAGHDAD O-I 10/11/07 B) BAGHDAD 863

Classified By: Political Counselor Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

[¶1.](#) (C/NF) Summary. Independent CoR member Hachim Hassani told PolOff on October 31 he is forming an independent, moderate bloc in the CoR, although these efforts are in the early stages. He dispelled rumors that he may be nominated by PM Maliki to become Minister of Communications, but did not rule out other options. He said, however, he is more focused on spending the next several months building a base and platform for his moderate, independent bloc/alliance. Regarding the situation in Turkey, he said the Kurds "should not be weakened," but also conceded they need to make some effort to close PKK offices. Hachim complained the CoR's Presidency Council is ineffective due to sectarianism, and believes this is the reason for delay in passing de-Ba'athification, provincial powers, and oil legislation. He supports open elections and a new election law, but is concerned with the provincial powers law giving too much power to the provinces until the central government is stronger. End summary.

WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQIYYA AND FORMATION OF MODERATE PARTY

[¶2.](#) (C/NF) Independent CoR Member Hachim Hassani told PolOff he is discussing the idea of forming a moderate bloc with other independent members in the CoR, but hesitated to mention exact numbers. He is also extending his outreach for general membership to the Southern provinces as well as Anbar, Mosul and Diyala and said he has about eighty-five supporters. He said he was approached by a couple of ministers as well, including resigned (Tawafuq) Minister of Higher Education Dr. Abid Ujayli. (Comment: Ujayli may be hedging his bets if Tawafuq decides not to return to the government. A recent media report indicates a delegation from Ujayli's ministry approached VP Hashimi, asking for his intervention to allow Ujayli to return. However, this appeal was reportedly rejected by Tawafuq until all of the front's demands are studied by the GOI. End comment). Right now, Hachim is building his platform, which he expects to be his primary focus during the next several months. He hesitated to discuss his reasons for breaking away from Iraqiyya in September 2007 or to criticize its leader, Ayad Allawi, personally.

MINISTERIAL RUMORS DISPELLED

[¶3.](#) (C/NF) There were rumors Hachim would be nominated by Prime Minister Maliki to become Minister of Communication (ref A). However, Hachim dispelled this rumor as old and acted disinterested in the position. He shared, however, that before the PM left for UNGA in September, he spoke with him about becoming the Speaker of the Parliament/CoR. (Note:

Hachim was Speaker in the Transitional National Assembly (TNA). Another independent CoR member told PolOff in a separate meeting that Speaker Mashadani told her he will resign at the end of the year or session (septel). However, it is doubtful he will concede his position unless he is forced out or has something else lined up. End Note). Hachim also mentioned Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Minister Planning as possibilities -- although Planning is no longer vacant. However, he said his focus at the moment, is to build support for his moderate party.

VIEWS ON TURKEY

¶4. (C/NF) Regarding the situation in Turkey, Hachim said "the Kurds should not be weakened." In discussing specific measures, he noted the Kurds need some kind of initiative to close some of the PKK offices. He acknowledged the KRG is "feeling the heat" and expressed the need to reach out to the Turks to find a long-term solution to the PKK problem. He fears if the KRG become weak that Iran will take a stronger hand in the region.

COR IS INEFFECTIVE, PENDING LEGISLATION

¶5. (C/NF) In discussing legislation such as de-ba'athification, provincial powers, and oil, Hachim complained the CoR's Presidency Council does not run the parliament effectively. He also highlighted sectarian differences within UIA and the factions of the Tawafuq bloc as adding to these problems. He stressed the need for the CoR to finish the constitutional review process and amendments so the next elections can be planned. He supports

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an open election system where members for the CoR are elected individually, rather than party affiliation.

¶6. (C/NF) Regarding the provincial powers law, he said there should be a strong central government with the provinces having limited authorities. He added after the central government becomes stronger over the next couple of years, that more authorities can transition to the provinces. He is cautious of giving the provinces too much authority in the current political environment.

PM MALIKI, POLITICAL BLOCS, STATUS OF GOI

¶7. (C/NF) Hachim called the current government "crippled" and sees national reconciliation difficult in the current political climate. He noted there are weak ministers (i.e., non-technocrats) and added he hears complaints of sectarianism within many ministries. He hopes PM Maliki will appoint more technocrats with credibility for the vacant ministerial positions. He noted that PM Maliki's inner circle of advisors are a "problem," but was careful not to criticize Maliki personally. He also commented "it is better to be close to Maliki than to be far away." He noted he plays a mediator role between the various sects/parties to bridge differences. (Note: Hachim is former IIP/Tawafuq senior party member. According to media reports, he was dismissed from the party in late 2004 when he refused to resign as Minister of Industry and Minerals in the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) when Tawafuq withdrew in protest of attacks in Fallujah. He later joined Ayad Allawi's Iraqiyya party, before leaving to become independent in September 2007. End note).

COMMENT AND BIO NOTE

¶8. (C/NF) Despite Hachim's previous ties to both the IIP and Iraqiyya, he appears to hold no personal grudges towards individual members or leaders of these parties. His efforts

to build an independent and moderate bloc are in the early stages, and he may have problems in picking up momentum without a strong organizational base. While he still holds interest in regaining the Speaker position in the CoR (ref B) or may be eyeing the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) position vacated by Zawbai'e, he claims he is mostly focused on his party-building efforts for now. Hachim comes across as a moderate that can be a mediating force and bridge sectarian differences in the CoR during this period of severe sectarian divide. He is a useful interlocutor and generally supportive of USG goals and benchmarks. He is Iraqi-American with family in California and speaks fluent English.

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